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*Municipal Sanitation in the United States.* By CHARLES V. CHAPIN, Superintendent of Health of the City of Providence. Providence: Snow and Farnham, 1901. 8vo, pp. 970.

THIS encyclopedic study will be welcomed, not only by American sanitarians, but quite as heartily by specialists in the various fields of social science. American sanitary treatises are deficient both in quantity and quality, as is our literature of economics and political science without the practical references to public hygiene which have aided greatly in the dissemination of advanced sanitary ideas in Europe. The tardiness of our writers is not due to want of problems nor even to ignorance of the social importance of these problems, but rather to a reluctance to undertake the herculean task of opening up the field and providing the materials from which a bibliography could be built up. This pioneer work Dr. Chapin has courageously undertaken and performed. Profiting by his detailed studies, specialists can now, from concrete data, discuss the limitations of governmental authority in sanitary matters, the social and economic need of protecting life capital, and the expansion of political concepts to guarantee such protection. Likewise practical sanitarians can exploit the various more limited fields of administration, urge the adoption of wise methods, condemn antiquated practices, and base useful propagandas upon undisputed and unbiased facts presented objectively with a view not to reforming but to instructing.

Aside from a general introduction which defines the fields of legislation and administration occupied in practice by our local, state, and national governments, the author confines description and comparison to the powers and methods of local health authorities. How boards of health are organized, where authority, executive, legislative, and judicial, is lodged, what salaries are paid, the extent and methods of administration in scores of municipalities form the main subject of the book. These facts are treated under the general headings, registration of vital statistics, nuisances, plumbing, foods and provisions, communicable diseases, and refuse disposal. With reference to each subject a comprehensive discussion of legislation and interpreted powers precedes the detailed description of administrative methods. In addition to numerous illustrations throughout the text, a valuable appendix exhibits model forms indicating the development of labor-saving devices for procuring and classifying information.

Of greater immediate interest to the general reader and perhaps to

the specialist in sociology is the chapter on miscellaneous sanitary work where are treated governmental activities in relation to the diseases of animals, school hygiene, medical inspection, public baths, urinals, control of barbers, gas fitting, baby farms, lying-in hospitals, excursions for sick children, protection of children in factories and institutions, sick poor, tenements and lodging houses. The author makes here a strong appeal for specially trained health officials, for official libraries, for a professional zeal that will not only map out facts but study the map, for a social sense that will reward the student-official who uses his field as a laboratory where he can help discover means to save life capital to the nation.

It appears that vital statistics, the "firm basis on which the whole structure of sanitary science and practice must rest," is at the present time for the most part neglected. The author not only adduces most cogent reasons for emphasizing this fundamental factor in sanitary administration, but he gives an elaborate explanation of the method in which statistics should be gathered, registered, compiled, and applied. He goes further and urges uniformity of method and content of reports by the various municipalities. To enlist the interest of the business world and to emphasize the important relation between prosperity and health, he would have health reports include the population, area, parks, streets, sewer connections, vaults, wells, houses, tenements, and a statement of the expenses of the health department. Furthermore, reports should be vivid, practical, readable, interesting.

While the purpose of the book precluded the possibility of including much social philosophy, it may yet be questioned whether the data are not presented too baldly, with too little relation to fundamental problems. A second writing would probably result, furthermore, in many revisions of style and in better organization of material. But the student of social science will find ample challenge of his theories of groupal progress toward higher æsthetic and sanitary standards in the unadorned collection of facts. The writer on economics and politics can profitably observe the shrewdness of judgment which would impel American sanitarians to higher standards by citing American, not European, successes.

WILLIAM. H. ALLEN.

JERSEY CITY.